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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Monday, July 8, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "TURKEY STEAK." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Chefs in some of the big hotels in the "show-me" State of Missouri are showing the rest of the country a new dish -- turkey....steak!

And now food specialists in the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, have tried the new dish and they say it's good. The turkey steak has a taste all its own, too. It tastes different from roast turkey.

And it has several advantages. You can cook it in hot weather without heating up the kitchen like you would if you roasted a whole turkey. And you can cook small amounts to suit your family.

Lucy M. Alexander, Bureau food specialist, says the turkey meat that will make the most satisfactory steak is the breast and the so-called oysters. The oyster is the solid piece of meat shaped much like an oyster, found on each side of the backbone about midway of the body.

The meat on each side of the breast is in two parts -- one large and one small muscle. Pull these two muscles apart and cut away the connecting tissue. You can probably fry the smaller of these muscles without cutting. But you probably will have to cut the larger one in two before it will fit the pan. And you may need to slice both into thinner strips. Turkey steak cooks better in slices an inch or a little less in thickness.

There are two ways to cook fried turkey steak. If you have young turkey (one less than 10 months old), the best way to fry the slices of steak is to brown them in shallow fat, then pour off the fat, cover the pan, and cook slowly.

But if the turkey is an old one (more than 10 months old), you may have better success if you cook the meat in water until tender, then slice, and fry until well browned and heated through.

Either way you cook the turkey steak, Miss Alexander suggests rolling the meat in egg and crumbs or dipping it in a batter before frying it. She says the batter may be better for old turkey that has already been cooked. The egg and crumbs or the batter help to give the steak a brown, crusty surface. The steak may have still more brown surface and may also cook faster if you pound it with a tenderizing hammer before you fry it.

You can put the parts of the turkey you don't use for steak in a pot with the bones, and stew them. Serve as stew or make into meat loaf, gelatin salad, turkey chop suey, jellied turkey, pressed turkey, and other dishes.

Miss Alexander warns that any of these turkey dishes made with the broth will spoil quickly in hot weather, unless kept in the refrigerator.

Turkey steak will be easy to buy if the meat stores in other localities follow the example of some of the markets in Missouri. In Missouri, turkey steak is sold at meat counters.

In some other parts of the country, however, turkey and chicken are sold by the piece in some stores. You can buy legs or breasts or any other part you want. So wherever turkey is sold by the piece, you can have turkey steak if you buy one or more breasts and slice the meat at home.

This turkey steak idea may prove an answer to the turkey growers' prayer. Growers now have another crop of turkeys coming on and would like to see the storage houses emptied by the time the new crop is ready for market.

Right now, the supply of turkeys in cold storage is about 2 1/2 times larger than usual for this time of year. Furthermore, a survey made several weeks ago showed that most of the frozen turkeys were the big ones that weigh 16 pounds or more.

Housewives won't buy many whole turkeys this size. But they may take a lot of turkey if they can buy it in slices for steak fries.

The Department's special turkey committee is helping to get this frozen turkey moved out of storage and onto the dinner tables. It is suggesting turkey steak to housewives. And it has succeeded in getting the purchasing agents for the Army, Navy, and CCC camps to recommend that these units use more turkey and that they buy heavier turkeys. Formerly, Army and Navy units could not buy turkey toms weighing more than 21 pounds. Now they are permitted to buy toms weighing as much as 25 pounds.

The turkey committee has also written letters to State directors of marketing and to extension poultry specialists, calling their attention to the large amount of turkey in cold storage. The committee pointed out that the quality of storage turkeys is high and prices are much lower than usual for this time of year. Replies to these letters showed that many State institutions are now buying turkey by the ton.

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